25189
PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

UTILITY APPLICATION

OF

LOUIS A. KISH

FOR

UNITED STATES PATENT

ON

RETRACTABLE PENCIL/PEN/STYLUS HOLDER

Docket Number:	03-12206
Sheets of Drawings:	THREE (3)
Sheets of Written Description:	TWELVE (12)
Express Mail Label Number:	EV 313989958 US

Attorneys
CISLO & THOMAS LLP
233 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 900
Santa Monica, California 90401-1211
Tel: (310) 451-0647
Fax: (310) 394-4477
Customer No.: 25,189
www.cislo.com

RETRACTABLE PENCIL/PEN/STYLUS HOLDER

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/402,412 filed on August 8, 2002 and U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/454,008 filed on March 13, 2003. The content of these Provisional Applications are hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

Many people use writing, marking or pointing instruments (hereinafter referred to generally as "instruments") in their trade, hobby or leisure times. These instruments may be in the shape of a carpenter's pencil, felt tip marker, regular pencil, golf pencil, "clicker" or stick pen, stylus or a pointer. In many situations the users of these instruments are moving from place to place as they perform their task. One of the more frustrating and time wasting aspects of these tasks is when they drop or misplace their instrument. Accordingly, there is a need to provide a device that retains an instrument without sacrificing the accessibility of the instrument.

SUMMARY

Exemplary embodiments disclosed herein are directed to a retractable device for retaining writing, marking or pointing instruments at an accessible location for an individual. Generally, the retractable device is composed of a retractable reel coupled

to a flexible member that is sized to engage an instrument. The flexible member may be selectively extended and retracted to provide better access to the instrument. The flexible member includes a first bore and a second bore. The first bore is sized to receive a connector from the retractable reel. The second bore has a varying inner diameter thereby allowing instruments of various sizes to be held within the flexible member.

According to various exemplary embodiments, the retractable device may include fasteners to reversibly couple the retractable device to the user or other readily accessible surfaces. For example, one exemplary embodiment of the retractable device utilizes a clip that allows the device to be coupled to the belt or pants of the user. In another exemplary embodiment, the device includes a shaft that extends from the device that may be placed within a pencil holder or the like.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a cross-sectional view of an exemplary embodiment engaging a large diameter instrument;

Figure 2 is a cross-sectional view of an exemplary embodiment engaging a small diameter instrument;

Figure 3 is an exploded side cross-sectional view of an exemplary embodiment;

Figure 4 is an exploded perspective view of an alternate exemplary embodiment;

Figure 5 is a cross-sectional side view of another exemplary embodiment; and

Figure 6 is a cross-sectional side view of yet another exemplary embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The detailed description set forth below in connection with the appended drawings is intended as a description of exemplary embodiments and is not intended to represent the only forms in which the exemplary embodiments may be constructed and/or utilized.

Turning to the drawings, Figure 1 is directed to one exemplary embodiment of a retractable instrument holder **5**. As shown in Figure 1, the retractable instrument holder **5** is composed of a retractor **11** coupled to a flexible retaining member **17**. In the exemplary embodiment as shown in Figure 1, the retractor **11** is a conventional type retractor having a housing **10** and a fastening means **12** for attaching the retractor **11** to an individual's clothing, or a clipboard, an ear sun visor, or a pencil holder. The fastening means **12** may be a belt clip or a bulldog clip, clamps such as alligator clamps, hooks or other coupling structures known or developed in the art. The retractor **11** has an internal retractable reel connected to a cable **14** that can be extended approximately 2 to approximately 3 feet from the reel. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the length of the cable **14** may be varied to accommodate various intended uses.

As shown in Figure 1, a plug **16** is attached to one end of the cable **14**. According to one exemplary embodiment, the plug **16** may be a generally cylindrical structure having annular ridges **30** provided about the outer diameter as shown in Figures 1-3. In another exemplary embodiment, the plug **16** may not include the annular ridges on the outer diameter. In yet another exemplary embodiment, the plug **16** may be a generally spherical structure as shown in Figure 5. In another exemplary

embodiment, the plug **16** may be provided with threads **32** on the outer diameter. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the plug **16** may have a plurality of shapes and be made from a plurality of materials such as, but not limited to, plastic, metal, alloys, ceramics, or the like.

As shown in Figure 1, the plug **16** is inserted into a bore **21** that is positioned at one end of the flexible retaining member **17**. According to one exemplary embodiment, the plug **16** is held by friction fit against the inner walls of the bore **21**. To achieve a friction fit, the diameter of the plug **16** may be slightly larger than the diameter of the bore **21**. In other exemplary embodiment, the plug **16** having annular ridges **30** may engage corresponding annular ridges **34** provided on the bore **21** to retain the plug **16** in the bore **21**. In yet another exemplary embodiment, the threads **32** provided on the plug **16** may engage and mate with corresponding threads **36** provided on the walls of the bore **21**. In another exemplary embodiment, the plug **16** may be snap-fitted into the bore **21** as shown in Figure 5.

As shown in Figure 1, the flexible retaining adapter **17** has a generally funnel-shaped body. The adapter has a bore **21** that is sized to receive a plug **16**. The bore **21** may have smooth inner walls in one exemplary embodiment. In another exemplary embodiment, the walls may have annular ridges **34** extending into the bore **21** as shown in Figure 3. In yet another exemplary embodiment, the bore **21** may have threads along the inner walls of the bore **21** as shown in Figure 6. The adapter **17** also includes a wall **24** that separates the bore **21** from the main cavity **22**. The main cavity **22** has a cross-section that diminishes as it approaches the wall **24** that separates the cavity **22**

from the bore **21**. The decrease in diameter of the main cavity walls provides a universal adapter that is sized to engage a wide variety of writing, marking, or pointing instruments of different diameters to be securely held by a frictional fit.

The adapter **17** may be made of a plurality of materials that have the characteristic of being relatively stiff, yet slightly resilient. Exemplary materials include, but are not limited to, vinyl or rubber.

According to various exemplary embodiments, as shown in Figures 1-3, the inner walls of the main cavity **22** are generally smooth. In alternate embodiments, as shown in Figures 5 and 6, the inner walls of the main cavity **22** may be provided with annular ridges that extend away from the walls of the main cavity **22**.

The adapter is capable of housing various instruments of different diameter sizes due to the resilient nature of the material and the varying diameters of the cavity **22**. For instance, as shown in Figure 1, the adapter **17** is capable of housing an instrument having a large diameter such as a carpenter's pencil **18**. That is, these large diameter instruments are inserted into the mouth of the adapter **17** and the inner walls of the adapter engage the outer walls of the instruments. As shown in Figure 2, the adapter **17** is capable of holding those instruments **19** having smaller diameter. That is, the inner walls of the cavity **22** that are near the inner wall **24** are capable of engaging the small diameter instrument. Furthermore, the adapter **17** is capable of engaging instruments having irregular cross-sections so long as the instruments are inserted into the cavity **22** to sufficiently form a tight frictional fit with the instrument. Additionally, the instrument may be removed from the cavity **22** with a sufficient pulling force to

overcome the frictional fit and be replaced with another instrument.

In another exemplary embodiment, the retractor **11** includes a pencil-rod attachment **25**. This attachment **25** is a generally elongated cylindrical structure. The attachment **25** is sized to be inserted in a bore **38** or a press-in clip bracket that is found on most hand-pulled or motorized golf carts. According to one exemplary embodiment, the attachment **25** has a diameter that is approximately the same diameter of a typical golf pencil. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the diameter and/or length of the attachment **25** may be varied depending upon the intended application.

As shown in Figure 4, the attachment **25** would be inserted into the bore **38** that is found on a golf cart and the writing instrument such as a golf pencil (not shown) would be inserted into the mouth of the adapter. Accordingly, when the user wants to access or use the writing instrument, the user would grasp the writing instrument and be able to extend the writing instrument away from the retractor housing **10** and use the writing instrument. When finished, the user may release the writing instrument, and the instrument will be held in an easily accessible location to the user for future use.

While exemplary embodiments of the retractable instrument holder have been described with regards to various embodiments, it is recognized that additional variations of the retractable instrument holder may be devised without departing from the inventive concept.